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COUNTRY

Syria/Transjordan

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SUBJECT

Relations between General Husni Za'in and King 'Abdullah of Transjordan

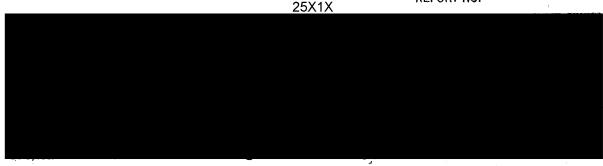
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- 1. During his visit to Arman in the fall of 1918, Husni Za'im told King 'Abdullah of Transjordan that he was strongly opposed to President Quawatli of Syria and that he was awaiting the day when he could take part, as a leader or a collaborator, in a move to establish a "strong" government in Syria that would get rid of the "dishonest politicians" who were ruining that country. Later 'Abdullah wrote to his Damascus informants, among them Hasan Hakim, asking for their opinion of Za'im and of his chances for fulfilling his ambitions. Hakim stated to source that he and the other informants had told 'Abdullah that Za'im was a fool, that his boasting was idle, and that, furthermore, President Quawatli had long been aware of Za'im's ambitions and did not consider them seriously.
- 2. When the coup dietat did take place in Syria, Abdullah was taken by surprise and immediately sent Suddi Bey Qasim, prominent Transjordanian and strong supporter of 'Abdullah, to Husni Za'in to see if the coup could be turned to 'Abdullah's advantage. Za'in offered no encouragement to Qasin, who, plainly enbarrassed at his discourteous reception by Zalim, confined his remarks to relaying 'Abdullah's congratulations and advice to deal harshly with Quawatli's supporters and others who had hindered good relations between Syria and Transjordan.
- 3. Later Qasim contacted Subhi 'Umari, pro-'Abdullah Syrian, who agreed to advise Za'im to come to terms with 'Abdullah. However, when 'Umari discussed this with Za'in, he was told that Za'in had no need for anyone, least of all for a "desert ruler who could not furnish guns and airplanes."
- 4. Shortly thereafter, however, 'Unari told source that Za'im was considering economic and military agreements with 'Abdullah and had instructed certain of his assistants to draw up proposals for these agreements which would not include any political provisions whatever. Za'im invited 'Abdullah to send a representative for preliminary talks connected with the preparation of such agreements. Za'im told 'Umari that any talks on these subjects would be held in Damascus, rather than in Amman, and that the "King could come to men if he were interested in Syrian-Transjordanian cooperation.

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5. Source reported, however, that, after a talk with 'Umari and Hasan Hakim, Za'im decided to send 'Umari to Amman on 15 April to work out details of a military pact between Syria and Transjordan.

Hasan Hakim told Za'im that he should arrest all major anti-'Abdullah elements in Syria, such as Dr. Subhi Abu-Ghanimah, and, although Za'im promised to do so, no further steps were taken, source states.

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